DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 112 741 HE 006 724

AUTHOR Mazrui, Ali A.
TITLE The Role of the University in Political Development in Africa.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Association of African Universities (2nd, Lovanium, November 1969)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 Plus Postage
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Development; Educational Objectives; *Higher Education; Humanities; Liberal Arts; *Political Attitudes; *Political Socialization; Sciences; *Social Responsibility; Technology
IDENTIFIERS *Africa

ABSTRACT

Politically-decisive institutions can be divided into two broad categories. One is the category of primary political institutions. These are institutions whose basic reason for existence is itself political; in other words, political parties, the legislature, and the executive institutions of government. The second category is that of precipitatory institutions. These are not directly political in their immediate purposes, but could have an impact on politics far greater than that exerted by some of the primary political institutions. The university in Africa is a precipitatory institution of a different but still decisive kind. While the pure sciences augment the riches of scholarship, and the applied sciences promote technological improvements and socioeconomic welfare, the humanities have to grapple with problems of values and identity and are therefore the most directly connected with the process of political development. The two most serious political crises facing Africa are the crisis of national integration and the crisis of political legitimacy. In the process of national integration a university may help to forge a shared sense of historical identity. The university's role in resolving the crisis of legitimacy should limit itself to the task of creating a climate of political and intellectual sophistication. (Author/KE)

****
* Documents acquired by ERIC include many informal unpublished *
* materials not available from other sources. ERIC makes every effort *
* to obtain the best copy available. Nevertheless, items of marginal *
* reproducibility are often encountered and this affects the quality *
* of the microfiche and hardcopy reproductions ERIC makes available *
* via the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). EDRS is not *
* responsible for the quality of the original document. Reproductions *
* supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made from the original. *
****

ED 112 741

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

by

ALI A. MAZRUI

Professor of Political Science,
Makerere University College, Kampala

In trying to determine the place of the University in the development process it might be useful to group the different faculties of the University into three broad categories. The first is the category of the pure sciences, the second is the category of the applied sciences, and the third is the category of the liberal arts and humanities, including of course social studies. By the pure sciences we mean primarily the natural sciences when studied from a purely scientific point of view, as well as mathematics and its derivatives among subdisciplines.

By the applied sciences we mean subjects like medicine agriculture, engineering, as well as subjects like botany or zoology when these are studied with practical goals in mind.

By liberal arts and humanities the range we have in mind is from music and musicology to social psychology.

In reality there are areas of overlap between these three categories of academic disciplines. Experimental social psychology, or certain aspects of economics, are as much applied sciences as they are humanities. But although any exercise in categorisation of this kind is bound to include a problem of boundaries of where one category ends and another begins, it nevertheless makes sense to group academic disciplines in a university in this tripartite fashion if we wish to understand their place in the development process.

HE 006 724

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

In broad generalities we might say that the ultimate value of the pure sciences lies in their contribution to **scholarship** almost for its own sake. The ultimate value of the applied sciences lies in their contribution to **institutional modernization, technological change and "techno-welfare" improvements** as social services are made more effective by science. But the ultimate value of the liberal arts and humanities in relation to development lies in their contribution to **socio-political development and consolidation of national identity.**

It should be noted here that the applied sciences are basically parasitic in that they derive a substantial part of their sustinence from the pure sciences. Although the pure sciences' ultimate value lies in their contribution to scholarship, that contribution itself can selectively be utilised for more practical purposes by the second grouping of academic enterprises, i.e. the applied scientific disciplines.

Technological and welfare improvements as a goal of these applied disciplines has to be seen in broad terms. The range of improvements envisaged is from building bridges to reducing the incidence of polio, from improving the quality of manure or the effectiveness of insecticide to certain aspects of town planning.

The range among the liberal arts is so broad that, as we indicated, there is an overlap with the subjects of the applied sciences, especially in the case of those social studies which are relevant to economic development. Economics as a discipline is a study of the process of economic development among other economic phenomena. But whether economics itself is a major contribution to the development process in a sense comparable to the injection of capital, or labour, or the building of roads — is a matter that needs closer examination. It could be argued that knowledge of economics as a discipline should be part of the infra-structure for effective economic development. It is at any rate perfectly meaningful to regard a subject like economics as belonging both to the grouping of applied sciences and to the grouping of the liberal arts and humanities.

In any case the second grouping, by its very diversity, needs to be sub-divided further into, first, a sub-group of liberal **academic** subjects and secondly a sub-group of the liberal professions.

Subjects belonging to the liberal **professions** would include Law, Business Administration, Public Administration and Education. These subjects are to be distinguished from those professions which depend more on the applied sciences such as Engineering, Medicine and Agronomy. The liberal **academic** subjects would be those like history, literature and sociology. Again the division is to some extent arbitrary, but might well be worth drawing in an enterprise of this kind.

When therefore we are looking at a university in relation to political development in an African country, the first grouping of subjects to scrutinise is the third one here — that is, that grouping of subjects we have designated as the liberal arts and the humanities. Problems of culture and social change, of the growth of viable institutions, of the emergence of modernised values, and the consolidation of national identity are all inextricably tied up with the subject matters of the disciplines under the umbrella of the liberal arts and the humanities.

Because of this, it is curious that sometimes educational reformers in Africa seems to be tempted to minimise the role of these subjects in higher education, often regarding them as basically esoteric. In fact the balance of growth of a university in Africa is sometimes threatened by two mystiques — the mystique of practicality and the mystique of science. The mystique of practicality tends to support those subjects which seem to have direct discernible practical application. Special favourites under this mystique would be the applied sciences, including the more practically orientated social studies.

The mystique of science on the other hand tends to equate modernity with scientism, and would certainly put greater stress on the pure sciences than on the arts and humanities.

Yet the mystique of science and the mystique of practicality do not always pull in the same direction. The pure sciences are sometimes, in their very abstract universalism, less related to the practical needs of Africa than, say, African history or African literature. The commitment of pure science to relative neutrality in value and detachment in approach sometimes amount to total disengagement from

social practically. But the liberal disciplines could, in their own imperceptible ways, be contributing to the consolidation of values, or perhaps transformation of values, without which national integration might be difficult to sustain.

Quest for Historical Identity

Perhaps the most fundamental political problems confronting African countries are reducible to two crisis — the crisis of national integration and the crisis of political legitimacy. For our purposes, the crisis of integration may be seen as a problem of horizontal relationships. It arises because different groups of citizens do not as yet accept each other as fellow countrymen. The sense of a shared nationality has yet to be forged.

The crisis of legitimacy, on the other hand, is a problem of vertical relationships. It arises not because one citizen does not recognise another as a countryman, but because significant numbers of citizens are not convinced that their government has a right to rule them. Integration is a problem of neighbour against neighbour, legitimacy a problem of the ruled against the rulers. A university in Africa has a role to play in contributing to the solution of both these problems, and the liberal arts and the humanities are fairly central to the enterprise.

What is involved is a process of cultural engineering, sometimes conscious sometimes less so. As its most conscious cultural engineering in education in Africa has needed to be guided by the following four imperatives — first, indigenise what is foreign; secondly, idealise what is indigenous; thirdly, nationalize what is sectional; and fourthly, emphasize what is African.

As I have argued elsewhere, the four principles are interrelated and often reinforce each other. Included very often in the process of indigenizing what is foreign is the other process of idealising what is indigenous. The hospitality of the village acquires now romantic lustre as the African genius for collective life is emphasized afresh

in classrooms. The whole literary movement of **negritude** is the romanticisation of black civilised values.

The third guiding principle of cultural engineering as directed by nationalistic ideology is that of **nationalizing what is sectional.** An African historian has captured the dilemma in the following words:

> "... The nationalist leader attempting to rally the masses and re-establish their self-confidence by appealing to their cultural heritage soon realises that the more each cultural group takes pride in its own heritage, the more difficult it is to achieve the common loyalty to a large political unit which is necessary for development and is the fundamental goal of African nationalism. With increasing self-government the old fear of "localism" reappears under the name of "tribalism".. In East and Central Africa, with the exception of Jomo Kenyatta, it is not the nationalists but the traditional rulers opposing national integration who appeal to history and culture. In South Africa, it is the white minority government believing not in national integration but in apartheid who appeal constantly to history and culture. In West Africa where the nationalists and the traditional rulers have come closest together, and the nationalist movement is most conscious of the African's cultural heritage, the danger of 'tribalism' remains — the danger that the self-consciousness of the different cultural groups might tear the nation assunder"(1)

Ajayi's characterisation of degrees and mode of cultural appeal in the different regions of Africa might have dated since 1960, but the basic point he is raising has assumed even greater relevance. Much of the pre-European history of Africa is in fact "ethnohistory". The unit of historical identity was the ethnic group or the tribe rather than the territorial state that we see. The heroes were therefore ethnic heroes rather than national ones. One task of cultural engineering after independence is therefore to nationalize these heroes. Kikuyu heroes must somehow be nationalized into Kenya heroes; and heroes of other tribes should also somehow be reinterpreted in wider terms and given a national meaning. The Department of History of the University College, Nairobi, is attaching importance

to the task of building a national biographical history.

The Department has invited scholars to study men of historical interest from different parts of Kenya — an undertaking designed to culminate in the first volume of a series of Kenya's national biographies.

The Department of History at Makerere University College in Kampala has been feeling the tensions of the dilemma also. The need to indigenise the history syllabus as far as possible is now widely agreed upon. A Department of History in an African university ought to put special effort into African history. A Department of History in Uganda ought in addition to allow special room for Uganda history. But a simple indigenisation of the history syllabus at Makerere, on the basis purely of available academic material, might once again emphasize the pre-eminence of Buganda in Uganda's history, with all the political sensitivities involved in this.

It is beginning to be felt that indigenizing the syllabus is not enough; an attempt to nationalize what is sectional in Uganda's history must also be undertaken. One method of nationalizing sectional or ethnic history is to emphasize its national implications. But in the political climate of Uganda it would defeat the object of the exercise if historians simply portrayed Buganda heroes as basically national heroes. The equation of Buganda with Uganda is precisely what many of the other Ugandans objected to. The answer therefore in Uganda's conditions might be sheer ethnic balance. Historical sectionalism is nationalized by pluralizing it, adding section to section. The heroes of the different Uganda tribes become national heroes by a process of conferring parity of esteem on the sub-groups from which they emerged. The Department of History at Makerere seems therefore to have embarked on precisely this quest for balance and for a national frame of reference in Uganda's historiography.

If economic development with its planning and projections is a future oriented pre-occupation, political development must sometimes include an obsession with the past. This accounts for the ambivalence of African nations in taking pride both in their newness as states and at the same time seeking to emphasize or forge an antiquity.

On visiting the United Nations in 1960-61, it was interesting for me to listen to Nigeria's Foreign Minister at the time, Jaja Wachuku, as he revelled in the innocence of the new nation just born. But involved in that very concept of rebirth was a paradoxical desire... the desire to be grey-haired and wrinkled as a nation, of wanting to have an antiquity. This is directly related to the problem of national identity in Africa. In so far as nations are concerned, there is often a direct correlation between **identity** and **age**. The desire to be old becomes part of the quest for identity. A country like Iran or Egypt would not have a longing of precisely the kind which a country like Kenya or Uganda would have.

What we have therefore had in the newly invented states of Africa has been the paradoxical desire to **modernise** and **ancientise** at the same time. Thus the Gold Coast on emerging into independence, first decided to wear the ancient name of Ghana — and then to modernise the country as rapidly as possible. Mali has been another case of a new state trying to create a sense of antiquity by adopting an old name. Malawi and Biafra are also illustrations of trying to strengthen identity through the ancient associations of a name. And when the whole of the white minority in Rhodesia is one day broken, we will almost certainly have a country called Zimbabwe.

Now, if this re-christening of countries leads to a situation in which the history of **old** Ghana is taught possessively in the schools of the **new** Ghana, the descendants of contemporary Ghanaians will have their sense of historical identity affected by this — even if the new Ghana does not occupy the same spot on the map as the old Ghana.

Law and Institutional Homogenization

To put it in a more specific way, there are three processes of socio-political change involved in an African country. These are, first the erosion of tribally exclusive traditions, secondly the attempt to erect nationally inclusive traditions and thirdly the construction of the modern state. All three processes are of relevance to political development, and in all three a university does have an

important part to play.

Sometimes the attempt to create a nationally inclusive tradition merges into the process of creating a modern state. This is perhaps best illustrated in the sphere of legal systems in commonwealth African countries. Under British rule two broad categories of law were operating — first, the modern codified usually English Law, principally operating in criminal and to some extent civil cases; and secondly, customary African Law operating pre-eminently in matters like marriage, divorce, inheritance and other civil issues. In effect there was a good deal of overlap between the operations of these two legal systems, but the main point for our analysis is that this was a situation where an indigenous universe of legal concepts and an imported universe of legal concepts co-existed with defined boundaries of operation.

What should be remembered is that what went under the name of "African Customary Law" was, in fact, a multiplicity of indigenous systems in each country. The traditions involved were essentially of a tribally exclusive type. It was not a question of the local legal universe being shared by all or most of the groups there. It was a question of highly sectionalised legal areas.

Different Commonwealth African countries have been seeking ways of integrating not only the imported system of law with the local ones, but initially the integration of the local sub-systems with each other. In Uganda in 1964, a Commission had indeed undertaken the massive job of taking evidence from all groups in customary provisions on marriage, divorce and the status of women. Kenya embarked on a similar exercise of accumulating evidence three years later. The object of the exercise has been, in part, to distill out of the multiplicity of tribally exclusive traditions something which could form the basis of a new nationally inclusive common tradition. The hope was to move to a situation in which Uganda Law and Kenya Law on these matters of marriage and status of women (and, in the case of Kenya, inheritance) would rest on a new national base, bearing in mind some of the demands of modernization and of national homogeneity.

New attitudes on marriage and divorce could let loose other important side-effects — ranging from a transformation of marriage patterns to a revolution in the role of women in economic development.[2]

Legal integration of this kind is usually fraught with political difficulties. In the case of Uganda, an extra difficulty was the absence of a Faculty of Law at Makerere, with research effectiveness great enough to discern areas of potential legal synthesis on the national scene. The study of customary law in Africa also demands anthropological perceptiveness. Makerere University College have a Department of Sociology with some interest in the Sociology and Anthropology of Law. But there was not enough man-power of both anthropological and legal expertise to be mobilised by the government should the government have decided on a determined policy of legal synthesis.

Kenya does not have a Faculty of Law in the University College of Nairobi either, though there has been increasing involvment in legal studies by the College. The Kenya Government in its recent attempt to devise a national system on marriage, divorce and inheritance, has used some expertise of varied disciplinary kind. But there is no doubt that the exercise would have stood to gain if there had been in Nairobi a longer established base of legal and anthropological expertise relevant to the task in hand. Sometimes governments do not think of turning to universities for help in national integration simply because the relevant departments in universities have either not demonstrated their relevance or in any case are too weak to be effective for the job in hand.

Total integration of the legal sub-systems within each multi-ethnic African country might be difficult to achieve, and perhaps, be not even desirable. But the quest to reduce heterogeneity in matters basic to the lives of the majority of the people must surely be counted as an important feature of national integration. To that extent a university's involvement in this task of legal and customary homogenisation is an involvement in the integrative aspects of political development itself. As in the case of merging tribal histories into a coherent national history, the case of legal integration in this sense

is one of forging tribal regulators of social behaviour into a pattern of national regulative complex. We are once again in the realm of nationalizing what is sectional. One could cite other examples in the liberal arts, humanities, and the liberal professions, where national integration could be promoted by specific methodological approaches. A university then becomes part of the process of national development by helping to forge, gradually and critically a new national intellectual culture.

The University and Trans-Tribal Manpower

But what people are being educated at the university? Which tribal or ethnic groups are going to share this new national intellectual culture? This is where it becomes important to be sure that universities produce an intellectual elite which is ethnically diversified. If there is something in the admissions procedures, or the general distribution of pre-university education, which results in the preponderance of certain tribes as students in the university as against others, there is a serious danger that the university's role in national integration might be compromised. High level manpower in Africa has to be tribally mixed if its not to generate emotions which are nationally dangerous. Opportunities for university entry should therefore be equitable distributed as rapidly as possible between the different sub-groups, not only to ensure that parents within different tribal communities do not feel underprivileged as compared with parents in some other group, but also in order to ensure that the leaders of thought and policy formation who might emerge from a university are not produced on a basis of ethnic imbalance. Sometimes the job of rectifying the ethnic imbalance which was inherited from the colonial system cannot be accomplished in a year or two. The distribution of education might have been too drastically disproportionate during the colonial period to be immediately restored to equity on attainment of independence. But the problem has to be treated with sufficient urgency if it is to avert certain areas of political dis-equilibrium.

There was a time when we liked to think of educated Africans as

being basically de-tribalised. But perhaps we should have made a distinction between de-tribalisation and de-traditionalisation. De- tribalisation might therefore be defined as a process by which a person loses not only the customary mode of behaviour of the tribe but also any compelling loyalty towards it. But de-traditionalisation may only mean that a person has lost the sense of conforming to tribal ritual and tribal custom, but still retains an active or potentially active loyalty to his tribe.

Among the most radically de-traditionalised of all Africans must presumably be included African academics at Universities. But the universities of Ibadan and Lagos before the Nigerian coup of January 1966 were already feeling the internal tensions of conflicting ethnic loyalties between African academics themselves.

The University College, Nairobi, have at times experienced comparable difficulties. The Luo as an ethnic group have produced more academics in East Africa than any other single community. This is not a simple matter of size, since there are other ethnic groups of comparable magnitude, like the Kikuyu or the Baganda. No sociological or socio-psychological study has yet been undertaken to explain the phenomenon of Luo disproportion in academic pursuits. Some might even say that it is yet too early to see much significance in it, since the sample of East African scholars is still rather limited. But the simple fact that the Luo are numerically disproportionate as academics within the University College, Nairobi, has been known to cause some tension. The situation is not as acute as it might have been at the Univeresity of Ibadan before the first Nigerian coup when there was a disproportionate Ibo presence in many categories of staff. But there is no doubt that at Nairobi, as was the case at Ibadan, even the most highly de-traditionalised of all Africans, the scholars, are still capable of feeling the commanding pull of ethnic loyalties.

In the case of the Nairobi situation, it is not clear how the problem can be handled without giving rise to certain forms of injustice based on tribe.

The criterion of merit is so much a part of the ethos of scholarship that to deny a Luo anappointment on the basis of his tribe would be a fundamental departure from this ethos. What might be

less objectionable is the pursuit of ethnic balance in the distribution of good schools and educational facilities rather than in the process of recruitment of staff. One might therefore hope that a more equitable distribution of educational facilities in the country as a whole might, with the determination, lead almost of its own accord to a situation of greater ethnic balance in recruitment as well.

What of the university's role in promoting political legitimacy in the country? We have noted that in promoting national integration, or the capacity for people to identify with each other as compatriots and feel a sense of sharing a common nationality, the university can be quite effective. But it is far more difficult to assess what role a university can play in promoting the acceptance of authority patterns and governmental institutions.

In this case the university is confronting the old problem of "political obligation" in political philosophy. It is the problem of why and when one obeys or ought to obey the government. Where political legitimacy is fully secure, the citizens do not question the government's right to govern, though they may question the wisdom of this or that governmental action. When it is not secure, challenges to authority may allow little differentiation between dissent, insubordination, rebellion, and outright treason.

The University and the Problem of Authority

In traditional political theory, the problem of political obligation involved a shifting balance between the area of consent in government and the area of compulsion. And the area of consent itself has different levels. To take Uganda as an example, one might note that there is a difference between consenting to being ruled by President Obote's Government and consenting to this or that **policy of his** Government It is possible for an opponent of Dr. Obote's regime to be in favour of this or that policy pursued by the regime.

Thus, there were many Ugandans outside Obote's party who supported his toughness against the Kingdom of Buganda, although they would not vote for Obote in a general election. In this case they

accepted the policy though, given, a choice, they would not accept the government.

But even the idea of accepting Dr. Obote's government or consenting to be ruled by it, has two levels. The more obvious level is in the sense of having voted for Dr. Obote's party in the last election. Yet there is a sense of course in which even the democratic party, although in opposition, consented to being ruled by Obote's Uganda People's Congress. The very idea of a loyal opposition implies consenting to be ruled by the constitutional government in power, although reserving the right to disagree with almost everyone of its policies.

The problem in Africa in the first few years of independence was of trying to ensure that every opposition remained a loyal opposition. It was a quest for a situation in which one could challenge decisions of the Government but not the Government's right to execute them.

The distinction is a fundamental one but difficult to draw in day to day activities in a country. And that is one reason why the university's role in consolidating political legitimacy is so difficult. The problem here is of forging consensus. Yet there are two levels of consensus there is primary consensus, which concerns consensus on legitimate methods of policy making and legitimate methods of implementation and legitimate government institutions. Then there is secondary consensus, which might merely mean consensus on specific individual policies this year, or consensus behind the popularity of a particular leader. It is not the business of a university on the whole to promote secondary consensus — to lend support to this policy or that leader. But it is a university business to help in promoting primary consensus, which is the basis of political legitimacy. But the continuing problem is how this responsiblity can be fulfilled without converting the university into a propaganda instrument to strengthen secondary political consensus instead.

The dilemma is a real one. The difference between a university and an ideological institute is, in a sense, a difference of degree. A University in Africa is in a sense one of the most important precipitatory political institutions in the area. And yet, in its ethos of academic detachment, it is at the same time supposed to be **apolotical.**

Governments impatient for change might sometimes be tempted to say: "In our present state of underdevelopment, we want commitment and not detachment, involved creativity rather than academic objectivity. An institution of such important political consequences cannot afford to be apolitical in its ethos".

And yet it is easier to say "universities must inculcate and promote national values" than to specify what those values are. What are the national values of East Africa? The days when we could talk glibly about East Africans having common ideals are perhaps over. Ideals now vary not only from one East African country and another, but sometimes also between one generation of East Africans and another.

The most important lesson of the last few years of Africa's history is that African countries are not yet sure where they want to go. The whole question of values and goals is in a state of flux. The business of a university is not to respond automatically to the latest policy declaration from the capital of the country in which it is situated. Nor need it make reckless use of the latitude which the late Tom Mboya gave it in his book — the "freedom to analyse and expose government policies". What a university owes the government of the day is neither defiance nor subservience. It is intelligent cooperation.[3]

In its capacity as a source of skills, the university's cooperation is normally a matter of straightforward discussions with the government. But in its capacity as a source of values, the university's role is more complicated. We have already mentioned the tendency of university education to deflate some of the values inculcated at school. What ought not to be overlooked is that to teach an undergraduate to be critical of the most cherished values is itself to inculcate a new value — the ulimate value of independent thinking. Can independent Africa do without independent thought? There have been cases of African leaders behaving as if national political independence could not be combined with individual intellectual independence. But at least within the precincts of the university, our own leaders in East Africa have so far respected the academician's right to be sceptical without being subversive, sympathetic without being

subservient.

In the state of flux in which political values in Africa now are, there is a need not only for nation-building but also for norm-building. But a university in such a situation helps the growth of values best by controlled scepticism rather than "inculcation of national values". There are no such national values yet. They remain to be "built". The starting point must be — to change the metaphor a greater intellectual sobriety in East Africa. It is to this sobriety that the University might perhaps try to contribute. And primary consensus as an acceptance of new institutional patterns must, in a modern state, be born out of intellectual such awareness.

CONCLUSION

We might divide politically-decisive institutions into two broad categories. One is the category of **primary** political institutions. These are those institutions whose basic reason for existence is itself political. The more pre-eminent among these are political parties, the legislature, and the executive institutions of government.

The second category of politically-decisive institutions is the category of precipitatory institutions. These are not themselves directly political in their immediate purposes, but they could have an impact on politics far greater than that exerted by some of the primary political institutions. The military, for example, could — without taking over power — have greater political relevance than a political party. The army's basic reason for existence is less directly political than that of a party. In fact, the army is not normally a primary political institution in that sense.

But it has considerable precipitatory potential and could force major political decisions behind the scenes without actually taking over power. It could easily become politically more relevant than an opposition party. At times, behind the scenes, it could even be more decisive than the governing party itself. It might have been the fear of such massive influence on policy behind the scenes which made Eisenhower, on retiring from the Presidency, warn his countrymen

of the power of the 'military-industrial complex' in the United States. This complex was, in our terms, becoming a precipitatory political institution of considerable consequence.

We have attempted to demonstrate in this paper that a University in Africa is a precipitatory institution of a different but still decisive kind. While the pure sciences in our laboratories augment the riches of scholarship, and the applied sciences promote technological improvements and socio-economic welfare, the humanities have to grapple with problems of values and identity and are therefore the most directly connected with the process of political development.

We have indicated that the two most serious political crises facing Africa are the crisis of national integration (in the sense of forging different ethnic groups into one nation) and the crisis of political legitimacy (in the sense of establishing and consolidating institutions of authority accepted as legitimate by general primary consensus). It is easier to see how a university can contribute to the solution of the crisis of integration than to see the role it can play in promoting political legitimacy.

In the process of national integration a university may help to forge a shared sense of historical identity; or help to synthesize different aspects of ethnic heritage, or advise on the integration of local legal system, or simply produce an ethnically mixed reservoir of high-level manpower. All these in their own way are contributions to the integrative process.

But in the solution of the crisis of legitimacy there migh be a thin line separating the cause of creating primary consensus for long-term political institutions from the cause of creating secondary popularity for the particular regime in power at this moment in time. And the latter enterprise could easily transform the University into an extension of the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Information.

In order to resolve the dilemma, the University's role in resolving the crisis of legitimacy should limit itself to the task of creating a climate of political and intellectual sophistication. When, therefore, a primary consensus does emerge in an African country in long-term

support of particular governmental institutions, it will be consensus solidly based on informed political awareness and intellectual sobriety.

Perhaps this is where the scientific method moves down from the realm of pure scholarship in the natural sciences to the arena of conflicting social values. A university even in task of helping the nation to solve its ultimate political crises must somewhow retain a point of contact with science as an **attitude**. Perhaps **controlled scepticism** is the most important contribution that the natural sciences have made to other areas of thought. Easy credulity is unscientific. Controlled scepticism is a combination of honest readiness to be convinced with a critical evaluation of the evidence. This is what science has contributed to rationality. And it is what the University of East Africa might, in a host of subtle ways, continue to contribute to the intellectual climate of the region it serves.

Perhaps that is the difference after all between a university and an ideological institute. In Ghana, under Nkrumah, the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute was a primary political institution. In Kenya in 1964/65 the Lumumba Institute was also a primary political institution. But a University in Africa must remain basically precipitatory — something which is contributing to major political changes in the countries it serves but not in itself a primary instrument of politics as such.[1]

FOOTNOTES

(1.) J.F.A. Ajayi "The Place of African History and Culture in the Process of Nation-Building in Africa South of the Sahara" *Journal of Negro Education*, XXX, 3, 1960, pp. 206-213. Reprinted in *Social Change: The Colonial Situation* edited by Immanuel Wallerstin (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966) pp. 606-616.

(2.) Some of these issues are also discussed in Mazrui "Nationalism, Research and the Frontiers of Significance" *Discussion at Bellagio: The* Political *Alternatives of Development*, compiled and

edited by K.H. Silvet (New York The American University Field Staff, 1964) pp. 161-163.

(3.) Mboya, *Freedom and After* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1963) p. 104.

(4.) See also Ali A. Mazrui and Yash Tandon "The University of East Africa as a Political Institution", *Minerva*, Vol. V, No. 3, 1967.

SUMMARY OF DEBATE FOLLOWING PAPER

by

PROFESSOR ALI A. MAZRUI

on

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY ON POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman — Mgr. Tshibangu

We thank Professor Mazrui for the excellent paper he has presented. Personally, I wish to congratulate him for the quality and clarity of the treatment. He spoke about the problems of development of the University in the heart of the nation and told us about the responsibilities of the University towards the nation.

He spoke about the important problems of customary law and tradition; and presented the problem of consensus and its strength on the system of Government. These are just examples of the many diverse and most interesting issues he raised. The paper is open for discussion.

University of Ghana — Dr. Kwapong

Brought up the question of participation of the University personnel in the political field and the difficult problems of participation of parties in University life, and the "nervousness" of Authority towards students criticisms. 'The relation of University staff and parties is fundamental because the consensus exists and can be the cause of modification of Government.'

Professor Mazrui

This is of course a crucial point, yet when there is a decline in the romantic nature of politics in social projection, there is less or no problem. Also as the Government becomes more assured, there is a decline (by then) in participation in University life. There is also an evolution of attitude towards politics as a career becoming less attractive.

My idea is that when we want to africanise things, we should adapt them to the policical life of the country. If Authority decide on Africanisation of syllabus we must count the cost. The price is an increased sensitivity to criticism.

Dr. Kwapong

Is this not walking a tight rope?

Professor Mazrui

Yes!

University of Dakar — Dr. Sy

In trying to explain the role of the University the speaker has emphasized two things, the legitimacy of the authority of the University and the role of the University in Society.

I am surprised to find in his paper that he spoke only of the role of the University in a very special area. I am under the impression that he did not treat the subject on the intercontinental level.

Professor Mazrui

I did not wish to go deeply in different cases occurring in different countries, our principle being to defend our faith.

I should like in this connection to say that Universities as a whole must be prepared to engage in sympathetic and critical dialogue. The minority opinion must be able to approach the majority in a hospitable climate.

University of Sierra Leone — Dr. Matturi

Was convinced of the vital role of the University in Africa in the leadership of the nation. He questioned the wisdom of governments employing foreigners as experts when their nationals were there and quite capable.

Professor Mazrui

Agreed, adding that there was now a gradual acceptance of the use of "local expertise".

University of Zambia — Dr. Goma

Queried Professor Mazrui's statement about the undesirability of having the University close to the Capital. The University should have relations with commercial institutions.

It often happens that the University due to its geographical position sometimes in the bush is without means of transport to establish communication.

Professor Mazrui

I quite agree that the question of location brings up many other problems, but I was speaking of the political geography with its possible repercussions.

Makerere University College — Dr. Lule

Should not the University rather play down sensitive problems in order to achieve national integration? He also asked if the rating of the Sciences in Professor Mazrui's paper is not in contrast with that of Mr. Gardiner's?

Professor Mazrui

Play down, perhaps, not ignore. National identity and integration is achieved only with the acceptance of differing factions.

Professor Mazrui

Would rate the Social Sciences and Humanities first, the Applied Sciences second, the Pure Sciences third, in the importance with the University's role in political life.

University College Dar-Es-Salaam — Dr. Chagula

If I am right I think you emphasize the engagement of the University in Politics, which is normal. But out of curiosity I should like to have some clarification on this matter.

Professor Mazrui

In my special area as a political scientist there are always political considerations. Even when you build a road the consideration is there. An institution as important as a University is always somehow, controlled by a government. Consequently the University's most direct role is political but of course it has roles in other areas of influence. Integration and legitimacy are the two most important factors.